



*Meningitis Foundation of America, Inc.*

*Ed Wiginton Testimony*  
*Meningitis Foundation of America*  
*October 16, 2001*

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I want to thank the panel for their attention to sepsis and for the opportunity to speak before you today on behalf of the Meningitis Foundation of America.

My family was robbed of our son, Jason, by meningitis and the subsequent onset of sepsis. I've come to learn that sepsis moves quickly and knows no mercy.

Jason was a happy, healthy 14 year-old in May 1998. He loved his younger twin brothers, the Detroit Red Wings, WWF Wrestling, running track, and was looking forward to starting his first summer job soon. One day after school he came down with what appeared to be a normal headache and flu. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The next morning, Jason's symptoms worsened – in addition to the high fever, he was now starting to bruise and develop a rash. We knew something was terribly wrong. My wife rushed Jason to the doctor's office and by the time they arrived, new bruises were forming by the second. The doctor recognized that the infection was taking over his body and rushed him to the hospital.

From that point on, it went downhill fast. The doctors said that Jason had Meningococcal Septicemia. Due to the severity, the medical team decided to

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transport our son to a children's hospital in Detroit. Jason didn't even survive the transfer.

I can't begin to tell you what it is like to watch your child literally degenerate before your very eyes – and not be able to save him.

Now I know first hand the devastation sepsis brings. I also know that decades have gone by without any new treatments and that physicians and families have little hope. My wife and I have dedicated our lives to trying to prevent other parents from having to go through the ordeal we did, and I am asking for your help.

This terrible disease affects hundreds of families every day. Please do not let a day be wasted in an attempt to make new therapies – rather, new hope - available to fathers like me.

Thank you.

## Jason Ryan Wiginton

10/29/83 - 05/14/98



We are contributing this story as a tribute to our son and brother, Jason Ryan Wiginton (10/29/83-5/14/98) and also to let parents know the seriousness and deadly nature of this horrible disease. We were ignorant to this disease and really didn't know the symptoms. We knew Meningitis was a disease, but we didn't know it mimicked flu symptoms or how serious it really was.

There is just not enough information out in the media to warn people about this. My wife Patricia does in home health care as a private duty home health aide. After this happened to us, some of the LPN and RN nurses she works with said they really never heard of or experienced what our son passed away from.

He had a form of Meningitis called Acute Fulminating Meningococcemia. It is a blood poisoning that acted so quick, that the bacteria really didn't have time to invade his meninges. He only had a small amount of bacteria in his spinal fluid.

Well our story begins on the morning of May 13, 1998. Jason got up and went to school as normal. The only thing different was he was going ice skating that day on a school field trip at a local ice skating rink. He mowed our lawn the day before to earn money for this field trip. I dropped some money off at the school office that morning after I dropped him off at school and some paper work for a summer job he got hired for in the schools when school let out for the summer. It would of been his first job. He was so worried about the money and paperwork, he was waiting in the office when I returned.

Jason apparently went on and had a blast on the field trip and returned to school. He had track practice after school and went to that but left because he had a headache. He walked home. My wife works midnights and when she woke up at 4:15PM, Jason was in his twin brothers room, Eddie and Brandon, playing Nintendo. Eddie stated that Jason had a headache. So my wife asked Jason to come into the bathroom and asked him about it. He wasn't much to complain but he confirmed it. His mom said he felt a little warm. At this point she gave him a couple of Tylenol and sent him to his room to lay on his bed. She came in and covered him up and put his ceiling fan on low. A few minutes later his best friend Danny called and she brought the cordless phone into him. He told Danny he didn't feel good and that they would get together another day.

Shortly after I arrived home from work. I recently got a day position in the school district I work at 5 weeks before. I was so glad to get this position because I worked from 3:30 to midnight for all of the boys' life. I could spend more time with my family at night. At about 7:00PM, my wife took Jason's temp and it was 102°F. We thought it was the flu since it was going around. At around 8:00PM my wife took his temp again and it was still 102°F. At this point she gave him 2 Tylenol and some ice water.



She tried to get him to eat something and he refused to eat. We had him lay in his bed again. At this point my wife warned him he had to drink something more or he was going to dehydrate. He then drank some more water.

At 9:00PM my wife took his temp. again. It had risen to 104.6°F. Jason was still complaining of a headache. She told him it was because of the fever. We ran a luke warm bath for him and he soaked in it for 20 minutes.

After he got out of the bath we checked his temp. and it had dropped to 101°F. This made both of us relieved and we told him to put on his pajamas and lay back down. He then complained of being nauseated and vomited in a waste basket in his room.

It was the only time he vomited with this illness.

We debated about taking him to the ER but thought that they would think we were crazy to bring him in just being sick with flu-like symptoms for about 6 hrs. We feel so guilty now that we didn't do that.

If your child gets sick like that SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY. We don't know if it would of made a difference or not, as fast as this disease moved, but Jason might of had a fighting chance. My wife left for work that night and we agreed that if Jason wasn't any better in the morning, he would be going to the doctor's office. My wife thought of him all night at work and how he was doing. It must of been that maternal instinct. She cried at work that night worrying about Jason.

It was a restless night for him, moving from his bed to the living room couch to try and get comfortable. He woke me a couple of times during the night saying he was thirsty or that he still had that headache. His temperature was between 103°F and 104°F. The next morning, I found him laying on the couch with two empty juice boxes. They were for his brothers' field trip that day at school and he knew that. He said to me he was sorry for drinking them and I said that there was no need to say sorry because that was the best thing for him right now is liquids. I called the school that morning and told them Jason would not be in. As I was leaving for work, my wife was returning from work. This is when everything went down the drain. I called her from my workplace and asked if she got an appointment for the doctor. She said she was heading up to the doctors right then because of something that wasn't normal. Jason had called for her to check out a bruise on his knee. My wife Pat checked it out and noticed a couple of more bruises on his arms. She also noticed a fine pin prick rash on his back and chest.

By the time she got him up to Port Huron from our home in Marysville (about 15 minutes away), Jason had broken out all over in this rash. He could barely get dressed and walk out to the car to go to the doctors. But he asked his mom if he could have a donut since he was hungry. She said no because she didn't know if he was going to have to have surgery. She didn't know what was wrong with him. But she gave him some lemonade and he drank half of a container of that. When they got to the doctors' office, the receptionist said they would have to go around back because of the rash and wait their turn. Pat didn't wait and just pushed her way in. By this time Jason could not walk for himself. The doctor came rushing out and took one look at him and knew what was going on. Jason was bruising right before everybody's eyes. The doctor said Jason needed to go to the hospital right away.

At that time Jason told his mom and the Dr. that he couldn't walk. They wheeled him to the car and at the hospital they wheeled him in.



The attendants at the ER told my wife they needed insurance information and the doctor said that he needed to be in an examining room now and that information could be taken later. The doctor got him into an examining room and quickly started to exam him. At this time my wife called me at work and said I needed to get to the hospital immediately. The doctor then asked Pat to leave the room since he had to do tests on Jason.

When I arrived at the hospital at 11:30AM, my wife was crying uncontrollably and when I went into the room my son was in, I could not believe my eyes. He was bruised and rashed all over his body. My son that took 2 showers a day and thought that when he got a pimple that it was the end of the world.

Well I can't even begin to tell you what went through mine and Pat's mind. I'm just glad his brothers didn't see him like that. Our Jason was going downhill fast. They were draining his lungs of fluid and his blood pressure was shaky. At this point the doctor was communicating with Children's Hospital in Detroit. The doctor was getting Jason ready to transport. We thought he was going to be airlifted but that wasn't the case. Jason said he wanted a helicopter ride when I told him this and he also said he wanted to go home and hold his cat Tiger. He was in a great deal of pain now and the nurses got him a stuffed animal to hold.

That was the last thing he said to us because they put him into a coma to help him breathe and they also put a lubricant in his eyes and covered them with pads so they wouldn't dry out. We ended up waiting for a trauma team ground ambulance that was on another "so called" emergency down in the Detroit area for 3 hrs. Why if this wasn't such an emergency, we didn't get some other transportation down to Detroit which is 50 miles from where we live. The doctor stated to us that Jason had Meningococcal Septicemia and we asked him if he could die from this. He said yes that the chances that he would live was not good. My wife and I fell apart. The trauma ambulance finally got there and Jason was stabilized to be transported we thought. They told us we could not ride along because there was no room. They told us to go home and pack some clothes to stay at the hospital because it was going to be a long battle. We wanted to follow them to Children's Hospital but they said we wouldn't be able to keep up with them. We picked up our preventive medicine Rifampicin for everybody in the household and packed and headed to Detroit.



Pat's parents are from a suburb of Detroit and we called them from the hospital to come up and pick Jason's brothers up from school. We were told once we got to Children's Hospital to go to the 4th floor PICU. We went there and nothing was going on. We asked a nurse about Jason and she went and got somebody to talk to us.

The woman that came to talk to us said that Jason was still in the ER. Right then we knew something wasn't right. Pat and I were escorted down to the ER where we were met by three hospital personnel. They escorted us into a quiet room and told us that our son had passed away in route to Detroit on the expressway.

At that time I think my wife and myself went into shock. How could this of happened to our handsome active son in less than a day? We didn't even get to say good bye to him. It has been 5<sup>th</sup> months since this happened and we are now only starting to get our feet back under us to tell our story. There will always be the "what ifs".

Just a reminder to the parents that are reading this. DON'T IGNORE FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN THIS NASTY DISEASE IS GOING TO STRIKE. I WISH WE KNEW MORE ABOUT THIS DISEASE. IN CLOSING WE WOULD LIKE TO TELL JASON THAT WE LOVE HIM VERY, VERY MUCH AND AND THAT HE IS IN OUR THOUGHTS AND HEARTS AND PRAYERS EVERY MOMENT OF THE DAY AND THAT WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HIM AGAIN SOME DAY. WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU AND NEITHER WILL YOUR FRIENDS. WE ARE FIGHTING FOR A PURPOSE IN YOUR NAME AND ALL THE REST THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS THAT HAS HAD THIS HORRIBLE DISEASE MENINGITIS COME INTO THEIR LIVES

#### Jason's hobbies and interests

Play video games, roller blading, running track for the Marysville Viking 7th and 8th grade track team, singing in the school choir, school dances, girls (especially the Thomas twins, Katie and Kelly), sports card collecting and trading, playing roller and ice hockey, ice skating, the Detroit Red Wings and one of their star players #91



Sergei Federov, the Stanley Cup, which he saw the Red Wings win once, 1997, but unfortunately didn't get to see them win it again in 1998, WWF Wrestling and one of their star wrestlers, Steve Austin, the Detroit Pistons and their star player, Grant Hill, minor league hockey teams, the Detroit Vipers and Port Huron Border Cats, fishing and camping, researching tornadoes, one struck a camp ground he was at while camping with the Boy Scouts. Jason loved his family and friends very much and his goal was to buy a Dodge Viper when he got older and had a good job.



If any body would like to contact us for any reason, please feel free to do so. It is very therapeutic to talk to people that have gone through or are going through what we are. Our e-mail address is [wigintons1@worldnet.att.net](mailto:wigintons1@worldnet.att.net)

#### One Moment in Time

The World was alive just a while ago,  
Now it seems to have stopped; and it hurts our hearts so  
The sun does not shine as brightly as before.  
And the once beautiful pond makes our eyes sore.  
The trees do not shimmer, the grass does not blow.  
The birds do not sing; but our tears, they all flow.  
Our Jason's heart was beating; one moment in time.  
So now this sadness fills our rhyme.

#### A FINAL GOOD-BYE

A FINAL GOOD-BYE, WE WILL NEVER SAY,  
THOUGH WE LL ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT DREADFUL DAY  
YOU WERE JUST TOO YOUNG TO SAY GOOD-BYE  
YOU DIDNT EVEN GET THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH.  
NOW WE LOOK BACK ON ALL THE GOOD TIMES WE SHARED.  
WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE REALLY CARED.  
WE HOPE WE WILL SEE YOU AGAIN SOMEDAY  
TO SAY THE FINAL GOOD-BYE THAT WE NEVER GOT TO SAY  
BY KELLY THOMAS  
WE WILL REMEMBER YOU FOREVER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

#### ALL IS STILL QUIET

All is silent  
All from one cause

You hear the voice  
And then you pause.  
Nothing is moving  
Except for the tears.  
The voice says,  
"He left at fourteen years."  
The voice said,  
"Stand up, take a moment for him."  
My thoughts shut down  
And everything was dim.  
During that moment  
Nobody spoke.  
Everyone was asleep,  
And nobody awoke.  
Everyone knows  
We did this for you  
Then the voice spoke  
And said, "Thank You."  
All is still quiet.  
All from one cause.  
You hear his name.  
And then you pause.

Joel Hoover

May 15, 1998

Sincerely,

The Wiginton Family, Edward, Patricia, Edward Jr. and Brandon

*Below are some links that the Wiginton's would like you to go to*

<http://www.angelfire.com/mi/boblentz/wiggy.html>

[http://my.webmd.com/content/article/1728\\_58224](http://my.webmd.com/content/article/1728_58224)

<http://www.wtv-zone.com/Kids-Corner/WebPages/Jason.html>